

The concept of connecting flights carrying the same flight number, making such flights appear to be through flights not requiring a change of aircraft, will result in a severe and undue burden on passengers with disabilities. Passengers who use wheelchairs already have a very difficult time traveling by commercial air carrier aircraft. With aisles not wide enough for wheelchairs we are required to transfer to 12 inch wide "aisle chairs". Then we must transfer from these "aisle chairs" to the aircraft seat. Boarding and deplaning on a single flight requires 4 separate transfers. When a connecting flight is required that becomes 8 transfers in a single trip. When a transfer involves painful moving, being lifted in and out of seats, and being dragged across immovable armrests this becomes an unreasonable burden.

In spite of the requirement in the ACAA concerning wheelchair storage locations in aircraft passenger cabins, the majority of people using wheelchairs are forced to have their wheelchair placed in the baggage hold. Wheelchair are often damaged in the process of them being handled by baggage handling staff. Typically there are significant delays in having wheelchairs brought from the baggage hold to the door of the aircraft. This results in difficulty for passengers using wheelchairs in making connecting flights. Since the aisle chairs we are required to use block the aisle of the aircraft we are usually required, unlawfully, to be the last passengers off of arriving aircraft. For passengers with disabilities using wheelchairs it is often impossible to make a connecting flight. The airlines, under the provisions of the ACAA, are required to get passengers with disabilities to connecting flights. That rarely is done. We are left to our own devices to get to connecting gates by airlines that do not want to take responsibility for us, as required by law, as such responsibility would require them to delay departing flights until they got passengers with disabilities to connecting flights.

Any action that would provide to passengers with disabilities less information about what will be required of us when we fly would result in additional discrimination against us by the airlines. It is often an argument to just reserve the seats that we have a right to reserve under the ACAA. If we don't even know that we will be changing aircraft, and even aircraft type, it will be impossible for us to secure the seats that we need in order to have equal access to commercial air travel. The more information that airlines are required to provide the more able people with disabilities will be concerning commercial air travel. A proposal such as this would simply be a move in the wrong direction, providing less information to us and increasing the undue burdens already forced upon us by an industry insensitive to the needs and rights of people with disabilities.